

UCLA Faculty Association

News and opinion from Dan Mitchell since 2009

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Monday, May 19, 2025

♪Take Us Out of the Ball Game♪ - Part 9 (Nobody knows)

From the [LA Times](#): President Trump's executive order calling on the Department of Veterans Affairs to house thousands of homeless veterans on its West Los Angeles campus by the end of his term promises the relief veterans have been seeking in federal court for more than a decade. But the May 9 order gave no insight into how the president planned to overcome hurdles that have long stymied the dream of a vibrant veteran community on the 388-acre property, which was donated to the U.S. government in 1888 as a home for disabled soldiers.

Trump's order called for establishing a National Center for Warrior Independence — with the capacity to house about 6,000 — “in which homeless veterans in the Los Angeles metropolitan area and around the nation can seek and receive the care, benefits, and services to which they are entitled.” ... **Trump's order implies, but again does not explicitly say, that the VA could reclaim land leased to UCLA [for baseball] and the private Brentwood School for athletic facilities...**

The timeline would not be so realistic, said Anthony Allman, executive director of Vets Advocacy, a nonprofit created to monitor the settlement of the first lawsuit. To build 6,000 new units, or even 1,800, by 2028 using the same financing model would far exceed the VA's capacity based on its past performance, he said. But that's not what he thinks the order requires. Allman sees another possible interpretation of the order would bear less on land use and financing and instead require a shift in the VA's housing strategy. “As I read the executive order, it's not 6,000 units, it's 6,000 veterans being served by 2028,” Allman said...

Full story at <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2025-05-15/trumps-order-to-create-housing-for-6-000-homeless-veterans>.



Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:30 AM No comments:

Labels: athletics, politics, UCLA

Sunday, May 18, 2025

Brown Took the Bait: It couldn't happen here, right? - Part 2



Remember the story of the conservative Brown University undergraduate student who decided to play DOGE and wrote to lots of university administrators asking what they do?

As we noted a week ago, Brown had the choice of ignoring the emails from the student or alternatively making a Big Deal about it and placing the student under investigation. Brown, of course, chose the latter, giving itself a ton of unpleasant

publicity.

Now Brown's investigation has determined that the student was guilty of nothing.

At this point it also had two choices. It could have let the matter drop or compose an elaborate defense of why what it had done could not be seen as infringing on free speech and academic freedom. Which option do you suppose it chose?

If you have to guess, see below:

...A spokesperson for Brown would not comment on the findings of the hearing, and sent [a local TV station] the following statement:

Both federal law and University policy protecting the privacy of student records limit our ability to disclose details publicly about disciplinary processes for individual students. While we cannot share details on the outcomes of Brown's student conduct process, we can offer broader comment on the issue and our process: Despite continued public reporting framing this as a free speech issue, it absolutely is not. Since the initiation of Brown's review, that review has

The Council of UC Faculty Associations

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- Delay the UC cybersecurity mandate
- Our Letter of Support for SB-829
- Concerns Regarding UCOP Cybersecurity Mandate
- CUCFA and AFT call upon UC to immediately address Student Visa Revocations

Remaking the University

- Betrayed: UC Is About to Make \$267 Million in Unnecessary Budget Cuts, Harming Instruction and Undermining Goodwill with the State Legislature and Governor (Guest Post) - 5/30/2025
- Liner Note 26. the University of California's Fiscal Crisis - 5/17/2025
- Liner Note 25. The Next 100 Days: Don't Make the Trump Damage Worse - 5/14/2025

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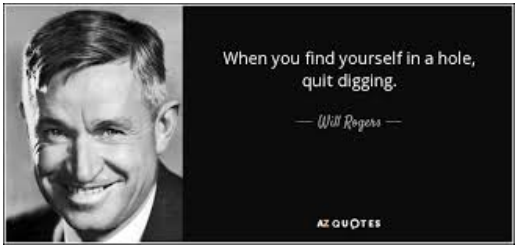
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centered on investigating whether improper use of non-public Brown data or non-public data systems violated law or policy; whether deliberate targeting of individual employees violated law or policy; and whether violations to Brown's misrepresentation or name use policies took place. Brown has detailed student conduct procedures in place to investigate alleged conduct code violations, resolve them and — in instances when students are found responsible — implement discipline. They are publicly available and outline in detail how disciplinary procedures and hearings are conducted, the rights and responsibilities students have, what outcomes might be expected, and how students can appeal decisions. Those procedures have guided our actions since this issue originated. Students have ample opportunity to provide information and participate directly in that process to ensure that all decisions are made with a complete understanding of circumstances. As Brown's procedures make abundantly clear, students are not presumed to be responsible for alleged violations unless so found through the appropriate conduct proceedings. Since the start of this matter, Brown has proceeded in complete accordance with free expression guarantees and appropriate procedural safeguards under University policies and applicable law.

Full story at <https://turmtio10.com/news/local/brown-university-doge-student-wins-disciplinary-hearing-rhode-island-colleges-higher-education-elon-musk-tesla-department-of-government-efficiency-may-14-2025>.

Apparently, Will Rogers never went to Brown:



Posted by California Policy Issues at [3:30 AM](#) No comments:

Labels: [academic freedom](#), [Brown University](#)

Reverse Brain Drain

From the [NY Times](#): ...As President Trump cuts billions of federal dollars from science institutes and universities, restricts what can be studied and pushes out immigrants, rival nations are hoping to pick up talent that has been cast aside or become disenchanted. For decades, trying to compete with American institutions and companies has been difficult. The United States was a magnet for top researchers, scientists and academics. In general, budgets were bigger, pay was bigger, labs and equipment were bigger. So were ambitions.

In 2024, the United States spent nearly \$1 trillion — roughly 3.5 percent of total economic output — on research and development. When it came to the kind of long-term basic research that underpins American technological and scientific advancements, the government accounted for about 40 percent of the spending. That's the reason political, education and business leaders in advanced countries and emerging economies have long fretted over a brain drain from their own shores. **Now they are seizing a chance to reverse the flow.**

"This is a once-in-a-century brain gain opportunity," the Australian Strategic Policy Institute declared, as it encouraged its government to act. Last week, at the urging of more than a dozen members, the European Union announced it would spend an additional 500 million euros, or \$556 million, over the next two years to "make Europe a magnet for researchers."...

Full story at <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/05/14/business/economy/trump-research-brain-drain.html>.

The article goes on to note that salaries abroad are typically lower than in the US, although health care and education are typically free or of lower cost. Although not explicitly stated, the examples are basically in the STEM fields. The article provides examples of incentives provided by various countries.

Posted by California Policy Issues at [3:30 AM](#) No comments:

Labels: [politics](#)

Saturday, May 17, 2025

Will Harvard Continue to Lead the Charge? - Part 5

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Contributors

- [California Policy Issues](#)
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From the [NY Times](#): Harvard University, which is clashing with the Trump administration over its academic independence and the withdrawal of billions of dollars in research funding, said on Wednesday that its president had chosen to cut his own pay by 25 percent starting later this year. The university has not disclosed specifics about its compensation package for the president, Alan M. Garber, who became Harvard's permanent leader last year. His recent predecessors were paid around \$1 million a year. Whatever it amounts to in dollar terms, though, the pay reduction is a symbolic gesture compared with the scale of

the university's fight with the federal government, which has already moved to block more than \$2.6 billion in funding for Harvard...

The university, which has already halted new hiring and suspended merit raises for many employees, said that other Harvard leaders were planning contributions to the school...

A sense of campus solidarity in the funding fight extends beyond Harvard's top ranks. Ninety tenured professors have pledged to take 10 percent pay cuts in order to help Harvard, the nation's oldest and wealthiest university, weather the Trump administration's onslaught. Ryan D. Enos, a professor of government and a leader of the group, said the university had expressed its gratitude...

Full story at <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/05/14/us/harvard-garber-trump-pay.html>.

Posted by California Policy Issues at [3:30 AM](#) No comments:



Labels: [Harvard](#), [politics](#)

Patent Victory (for now)

From the [San Francisco Chronicle](#): With potentially huge sums at stake, a federal court on Monday reinstated UC Berkeley's legal claim seeking nationwide rights to develop and market gene editing, the transfer of genetic technology between living organisms with the capability of curing diseases. The U.S. Patent Trial and Appeal Board ruled in 2022 that the patent for so-called CRISPR technology belonged to the Broad Institute, affiliated with Harvard and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, which had published a study in 2012 describing how the technology could be used to alter genes in plants and animals.



The board rejected a competing claim from the University of California, whose scientists had reported on the use of CRISPR technology to alter DNA six months before the Broad study. The patent board said the UC Berkeley report was the first of its kind but did not apply directly to genes in plants and animals. But the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit ruled Monday that UC had presented evidence that its findings could be developed and applied to genes in all living creatures.

...The court ordered the patent board to reconsider UC's contention that its study was the original breakthrough.

"This could end up being a big windfall for the University of California," said Jacob Sherkow, a professor of law and medicine at the University of Illinois who has followed the issue for more than a decade.

He said the Broad Institute was paid \$400 million in one of its first contracts with companies seeking to license the CRISPR technology. That contract and others already signed are not at risk, Sherkow said, but if Broad loses the patent, "no one will sign a future license with them." ...

Full story at <https://www.sfchronicle.com/politics/article/gene-editing-patent-berkeley-broad-20323843.php>.

Posted by California Policy Issues at [3:20 AM](#) No comments:



Labels: [MIT](#), [UC](#), [UC-Berkeley](#)

The Conversation



Last Monday, UC Chief Investments Officer Jagdeep Bachhar had a Zoom conversation with Blackrock executive Rick Rieder, who handles fixed investments (bonds) on "The Real Economy." During the conversation, Bachhar indicated such conversations might occur in the future on a monthly basis.

It might be noted that Blackrock is among the firms singled out by anti-Israel protesters at Regents meetings during public comments, although there have also been demands for divestment of Blackrock for allegedly following ESG practices (i.e., avoiding fossil fuel investments - which Blackrock denies).* Yours truly suspects the UC CIO is sending a message beyond that of the economic outlook.

That said, Rieder had various observations about the outlook.

- 1) He expects that when the tariff war settles down, there will be something like a 15% tariff around the US. Rieder used the phrase "effective tariff," but that phrase as a special meaning in international trade lingo.** I suspect he loosely meant an average tariff. He argued that President Trump needs the tariff revenue that will be collected given the US budget deficit and mounting debt.
- 2) There will be some return of manufacturing as a result of tariff protection, notably in pharma and chips, but not in such labor-intensive areas such as apparel. He used the phrase "social tariff" which - if memory serves - is a concept that Ross Perot pushed back in the day to describe a level of job protection.
- 3) He expects some kind of economic slowdown - I didn't hear "recession" - from the current turmoil. In the short term, portfolio managers are moving towards cash. Sectors such as health care and education, which normally are stable sources of employment are at risk due to federal spending cuts. Hospitality and restaurants are at risk due to threats to the immigrant labor force.
- 4) The Federal Reserve may due some interest rate cuts, but not on the scale forecasters projected before the current turmoil. In part, the problem is that without lower rates, federal debt service expenses are ballooning. Fed chair Powell will probably get to serve out his term which ends May 2026 despite Trump's grumbles about him. Meanwhile, the Treasury needs to refinance the federal debt with longer-duration bonds for more stability.
- 5) Foreign countries are moving away from the dollar to hold reserves. There are moves into other currencies and gold. He hinted at, but did not explicitly reference, a kind of run on the dollar. (That kind of development, if rapid, could produce a financial crisis. Or it could simply lead to dollar devaluation which might be what Trump & Co., may want, even if they don't say so. A lower dollar, other things equal, promotes exports and retards imports. It could also raise prices.)
- 6) New technology, i.e., AI and related, will eventually boost productivity growth but maybe not immediately.

That's the summary courtesy of yours truly. But if you want to see the discussion, it is available at:

<https://ia600107.us.archive.org/25/items/becerra-announces-for-governor-4-2-2025/Bachhar%205-12-2025.mp4>.

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*<https://thehill.com/homenews/state-watch/4543054-texas-schools-pull-billions-investment-blackrock-fossil-fuel-boycott-esg/>.

**The "effective tariff" on a product weighs the negative effect of tariffs on its inputs against the positive effect of the tariff on the product itself.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Effective_rate_of_protection

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:10 AM No comments:

Labels: UC

Friday, May 16, 2025

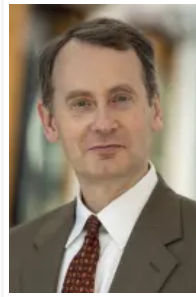
New Federal Official in Charge of Higher Ed

From [Inside Higher Ed](#): David Barker, a member of the Iowa Board of Regents, was nominated by President Donald Trump on Friday to be the Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education. If confirmed, Barker would work under nominated undersecretary Nicholas Kent, and oversee higher ed programs and policy. According to a news release from the U.S. Department of Education, Barker would focus on improving outcomes and accountability by reforming accreditation, improving federal student aid programs and ensuring grant programs match the Trump administration's priorities. Barker holds a Ph.D. in economics from the University of

Chicago and has taught at both the University of Chicago and the University of Iowa. Barker was an Iowa regent for six years where he advanced cost control measures, promoted academic freedom and ended "discriminatory DEI programs," according to the release.

Source: <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/quick-takes/2025/05/12/trump-nominates-assistant-secretary-postsecondary-ed>.

Official announcement: <https://www.ed.gov/about/news/press-release/us-department-of-education-celebrates-president-trumps-nominee-assistant-secretary-postsecondary-education>.



Bio: David Barker is a partner in Barker Companies, which owns, manages and develops apartments and other real estate. He also has been an adjunct professor at the University of Iowa and the University of Chicago, teaching real estate investment, urban economics and corporate finance. Barker has published articles in academic journals, and his research has been covered in publications such as Time Magazine, the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, and the Economist.

Barker previously was an economist at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, where he conducted research on real estate and the banking industry. He holds a B.A. degree from the University of California at Berkeley, and a Ph.D. in economics from the University of Chicago. He serves on the Governor of Iowa's Rural Empowerment Initiative and is an honorary Colonel of the Iowa State Militia.

He was appointed to the Board by Governor Kim Reynolds on March 1, 2019, with his term beginning on May 1. He was reappointed by Governor Reynolds on March 12, 2025. His term expires on April 30, 2031.

Source: <https://www.iowaregents.edu/the-board/member-bios/david-barker>.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:15 AM No comments:

Labels: diversity, politics, U of Iowa

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